

“Single Married Divorced or Widowed,” Part 8 - 1 Corinthians 7:25-40 – March 8th, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part eight of a series I've titled, "Single Married Divorced or Widowed."
 - Beginning in verse one of this chapter, the Apostle Paul has been answering questions that the Corinthians sent him in a letter.
 - The questions have been primarily about the marriage relationship as it relates to whether or not to stay single or get married.
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- This is what we see right out of the chute here beginning in verse 25 where Paul basically says staying single has advantages.
 - Namely, that of being free, especially in their present crisis, which is believed to be a persecution of the Christians at that time.
 - However, the one who remains single should only do so if that is what God has called them to do. If it's not, they should marry.
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- This begs the question of how does one know for sure if they're called to remain single. Simply put, you'll be content to be so.
 - In other words, you won't have unmet desires that drive you to seek out a mate such that the Lord is meeting all of those needs.
 - Conversely, if you're burning with desire as Paul mentions in verse 9 and 36 of this chapter, you're likely not called to be single.
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- Now, I am keenly aware of how this presents a problem for those who are not called to remain single but find that they still are.
 - As such, they long to be married or even remarried but for whatever reason are still single and in some cases it's been years.
 - At the risk of providing little comfort or encouragement to those who are single, Paul provides you with at least 3 advantages.
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1. If the persecution of Christians intensifies prior to the rapture, those who remain single won't worry about a spouse or children.
 2. When an opportunity to serve the Lord presents itself, those who remain single aren't encumbered with the families concerns.
 3. Those who remain single are able to devote themselves to the Lord wholeheartedly whereas one who is married simply can't.
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- Be that as it may, let me hasten to say the Lord may have you remain single only for a season and perhaps for these reasons.
 - Then, if and when you do get married, you have not sinned, as Paul says in verse 28, but know that you'll face many problems.
 - Moreover, because the time is short whether one is married or not all of us should have a loose grip on the things of this world.
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- Actually, this seems to be the question they had written to Paul about. More specifically, what should singles and marrieds do?
 - What should I do now that I'm a Christian, and we're in the last days, not to mention the potential for persecution to increase?
 - Perhaps it goes without saying, but here we are some two thousand years later, and these questions are more relevant today.
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- Thankfully, the passage before us this morning gives us all the answers to all the questions, for such a time as this, if you will.
 - Let me explain, here in verses 25-40, we are given the answer to the question of how we're to live being in but not of this world.
 - What follows are eight such answers that I found in the passage. You may be able to find more, but here are the ones I found:
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- v25 Are you single, don't seek to be married unless God has called you to.
 - v27 Are you engaged to be married, don't seek to break off the engagement.
 - v28 Are you freed from a marriage, don't look for a husband or wife, again, unless God has called you to.
 - v29 Are you married, you should live as if you're not. While marriage and family are important they're not what's most important.
 - v30 Are you happy or mourning, you should live as if you are not, in the sense that you aren't controlled by your feelings.
 - v30 Are you blessed with the things of this world, you should not be engrossed in them. Have them; don't let them have you.
 - v36 Are you unable to control your passions, then get married, you're not sinning if you do.
 - v37 Are you able to control your passions, then don't get married you're not sinning if you don't.
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- Here's the bottom line, the common denominator with all of them is that we should have a light touch on the things of this world.
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- Henry Morris, "There is nothing solid and lasting in this world system; it is its nature to pass away. It is folly for believers to act as though its values were permanent."
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- 1 John 2:15-17 (NIV) — 15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.
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- Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV) — 1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
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- James 4:4 (NIV) — 4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
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- I'll close with what one commentator wrote because I think it sums everything up perfectly, "Whether single or married, widowed or divorced—be content wherever God has you. And whatever your position, make Jesus your passion."